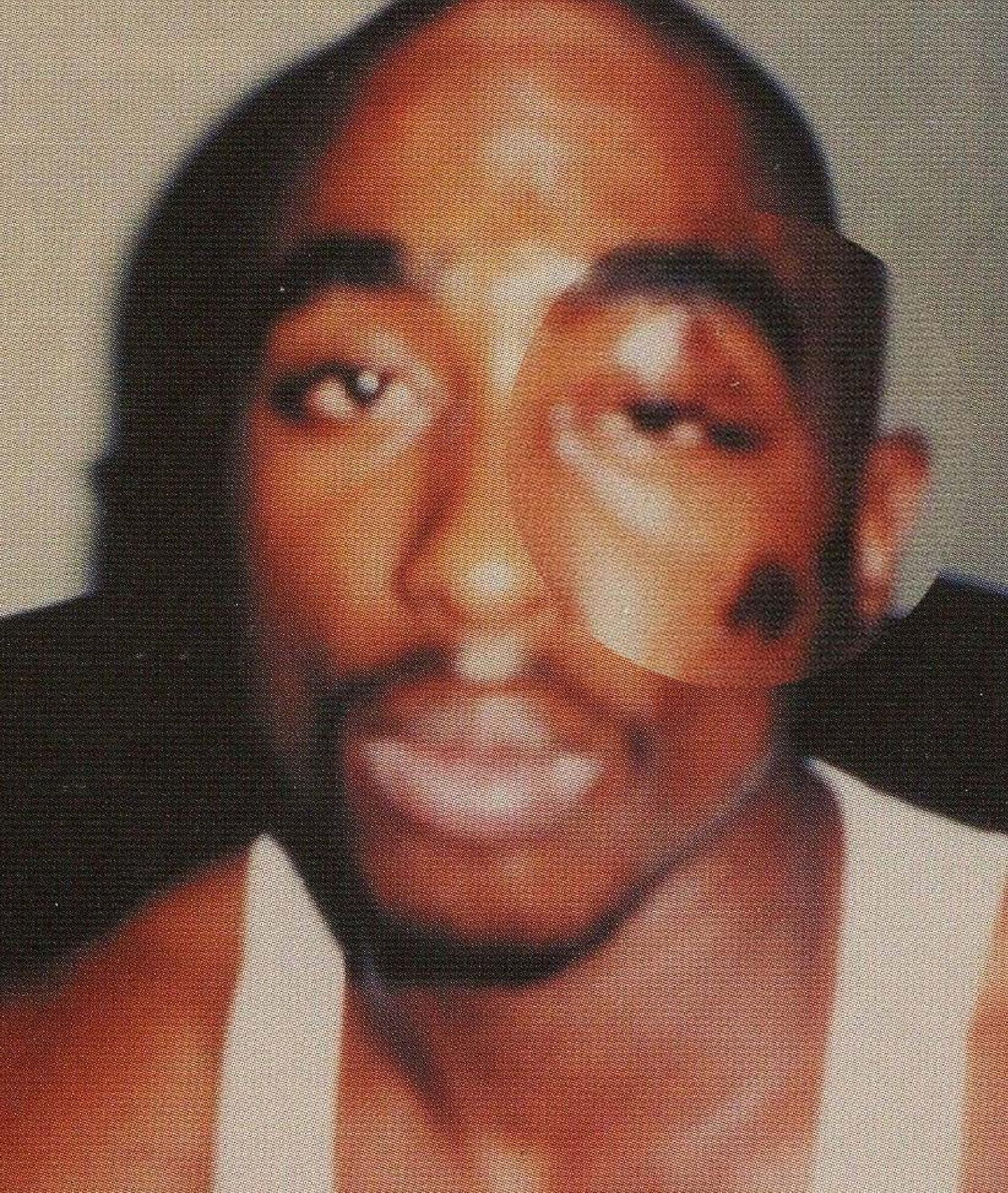




HIP HOP 1990



roots

Hip-Hop's recognizable style and fashion started in the 1980s and became a big part of the now very influential Hip-Hop culture. From the moment Hip-Hop style appeared on the fashion scene, this style has continued to evolve, with now the 90s Hip-Hop style mainly influencing the music scene and general public. But do we actually know the roots, story and most importantly the message behind what we now wear on a day-to-day basis?

"If one more cop harasses me I might go psycho", rapped by Tupac in his song 'Trapped', the rapper voices his concerns about racial prejudice and police violence. As Hip-Hop music was created on American ground by mostly Afro-Americans, their cultural, social, economic and political struggles have created the attitude and lyricism of Hip-Hop.

Rap became a way to express themselves and to give voice to important taboo topics, like police hate and violence, for the outside world from their own perspective. Another game-breaking rap that addressed these issues of the black community with the police was 'Fuck the Police' by the popular rap group N.W.A, where group member Ice Cube emphasized how the police hides behind the power of their badge and gun, using their authority to act differently towards Afro-Americans.

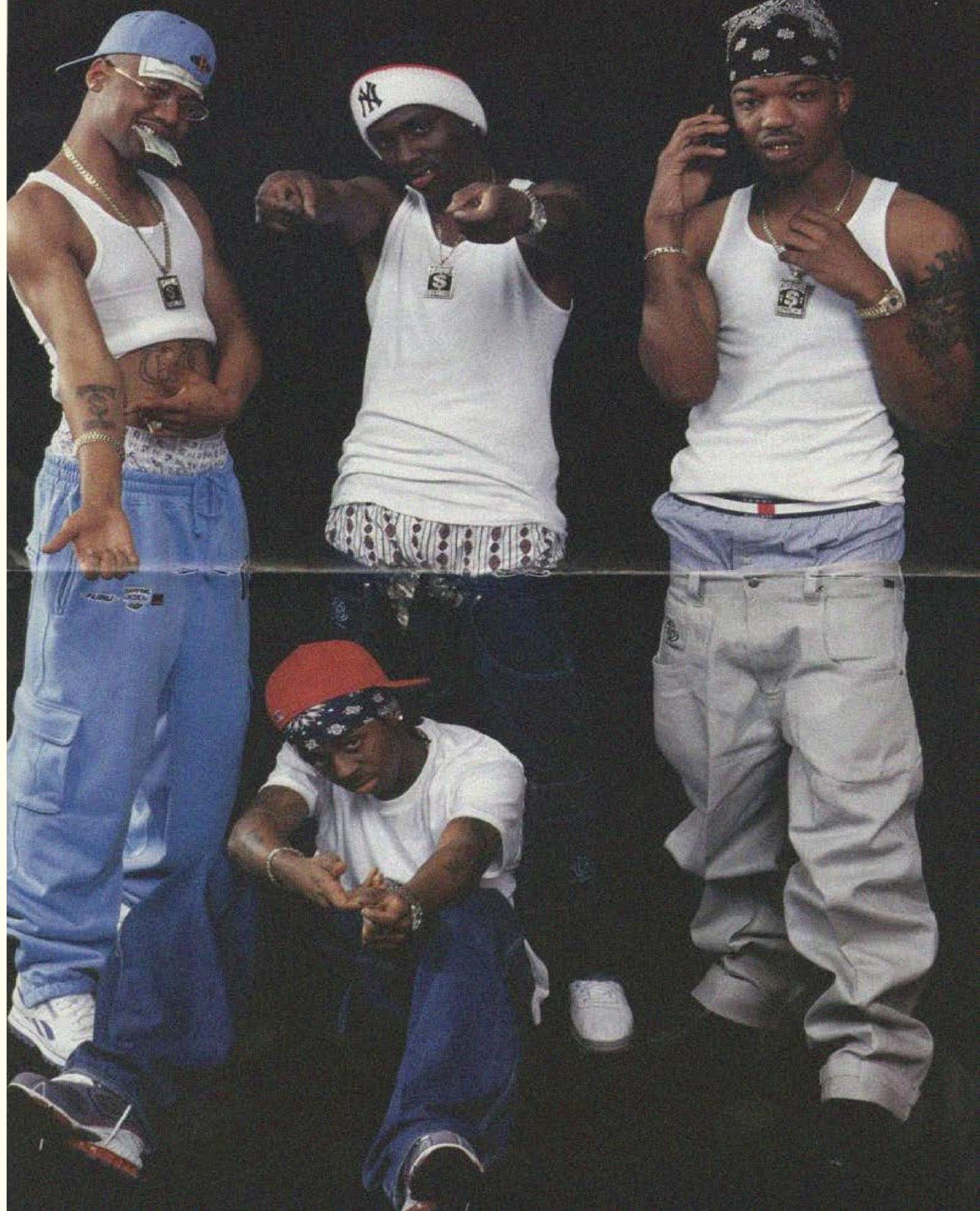
“If one more cop harasses me I might go psycho”

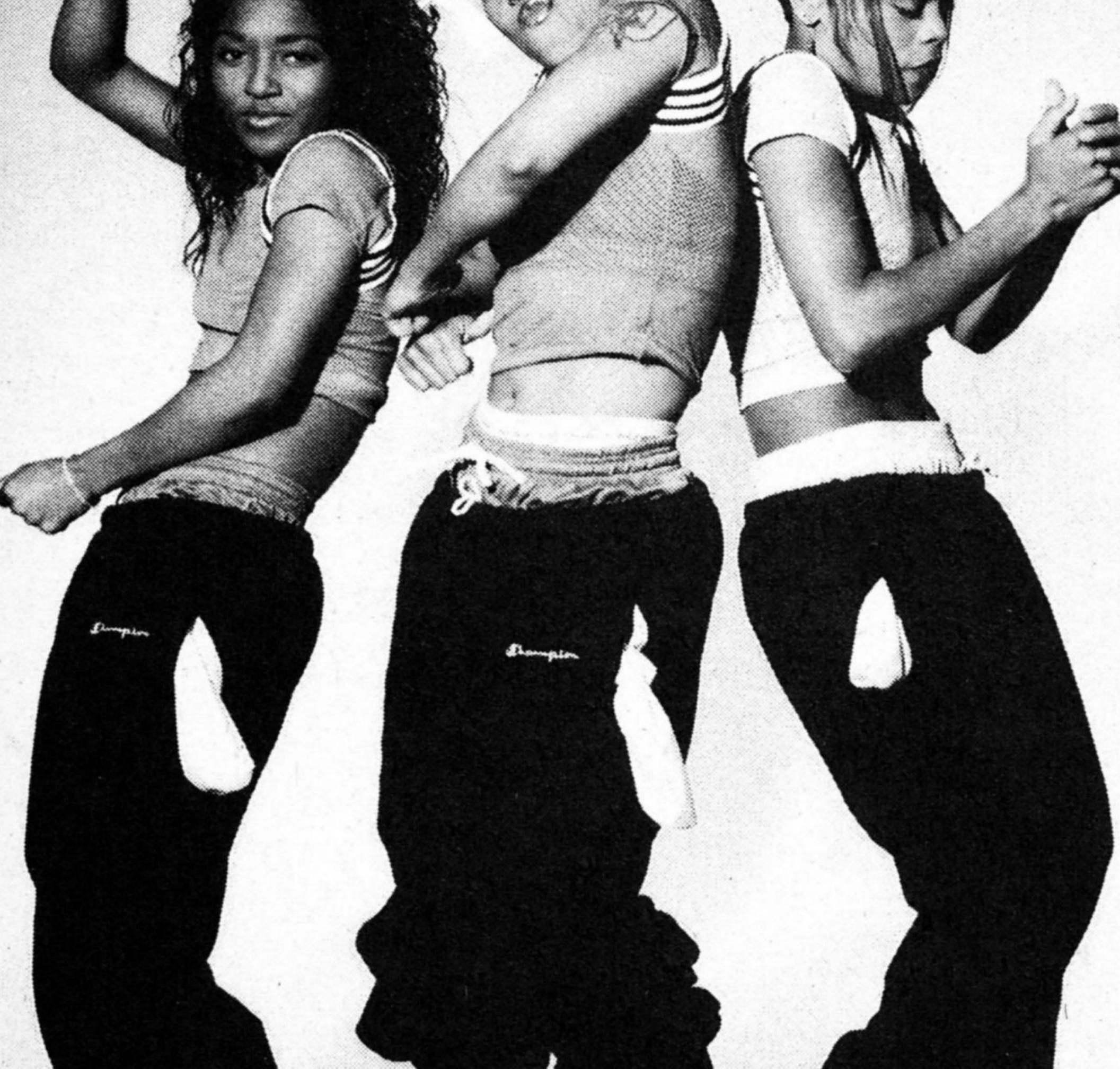
Next to this attitude in rap, the way Hip-Hop artists dressed was a differentiating form of communication that challenged dominant white, middle-class ideologies from the mainstream society.

Hip-Hop artists such as Tupac, Aaliyah, Lauryn Hill and Dr. Dre made their statements by dressing differently from the norm by using extreme non-tight-fitting measurements, which resulted in them becoming fashion icons and trendsetters. With time Hip-Hop fashion evolved and high-class fashion brands went along with this evolution. Simultaneous with public concern over the garb, the couture collections of fashion luminaries as Giorgio Armani, Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel, Calvin Klein, Isaac Mizrahi, and Donna Karan featured baggy pants worn back to front with underwear exposed and crotches to the knee. The exposed underwear was in violation with the ideology of 90s mainstream society where underwear was meant to be worn, but definitely not seen. Just like pants were not meant to be worn reversed, since the construction of pants had an obvious front and a backside.

Wearing your **pants low, oversized and baggy** is often associated with **criminality**, since it is claimed that this way of wear originated from the prison systems in America. There, belts were often prohibited because of safety reasons such as suicide and violence. There also was no sizing in clothing, which resulted in prisoners wearing oversized clothing. In Hip-Hop fashion this style is a symbol for **rebellion** since it visually is contrasting with the stereotypical "nerd" who wears his pants high and tight. This **extreme contrast** between **body size** and **apparel size** in Hip-Hop fashion, while in conventional clothing the **size** should approximate body size, has become one of Hip-Hop style's most recognizable fashion statements.

One of the reasons why their clothing was oversized might have had to do with the fact that most black citizens in America **grew up poor** and in big cities such as New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago. Once siblings **outgrew** their clothing, they would pass it on to their younger siblings. This subsequently insinuated that the bigger their clothing, the 'bigger' and thus more **'dangerous'** the older sibling was. Their older sibling could provide some sort of safety on the risky streets without being present. These risky streets could be a cold place for those who would spend a lot of time outside and a typical 90s tick down-filled jacket was an essential. Even though the essence of these jackets were to provide warmth for a very low price, the black communities chose to put in a lot of effort to **individualize** and style them and this effort made the jackets very popular. The style of this jacket is still seen today, as one of the best selling jackets by the brand 'The North Face' is greatly influenced by this 90s tick down-filled jacket.





Female hip hop artists tried to blend in to the **male dominated society** by clothing themselves in baggy outfits which were considered male in the nineties. The choice of wearing **baggy** clothes shifted away the **focus** from their bodies, towards their music. However not all **female artists** chose this baggy style, some rebelliously worn crop tops and mesh **see-through tops**, which **exposed** their **belly** and **body**. This was another of their feminist ways of demanding **ownership** of own **body**.

Feminist

coordinated

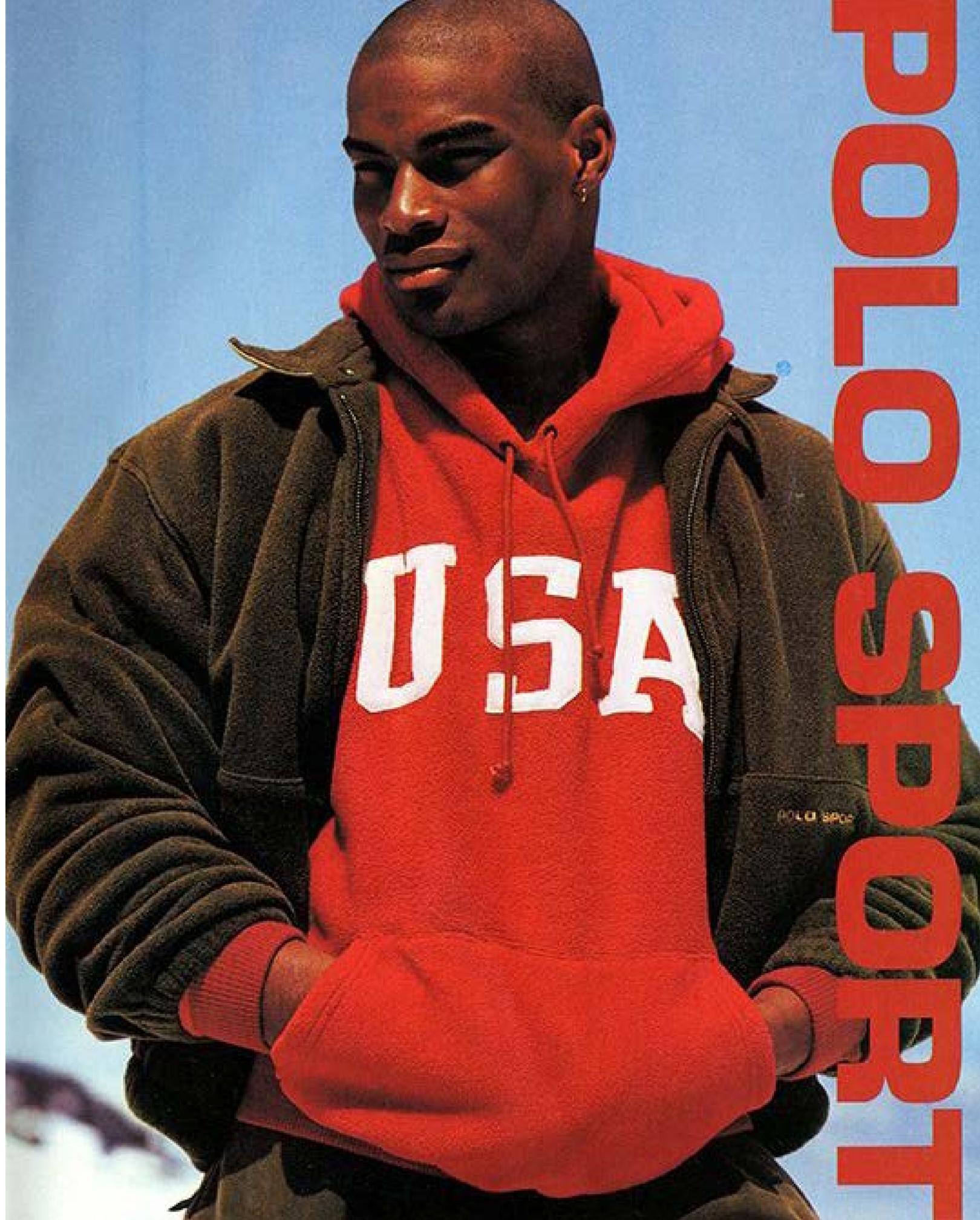
A big Hip-Hop fashion trend of the 90s that has made a comeback today is **coordinating outfits** by **color** and **material**. One pairing that really stood out was wearing a **denim** top or jacket on the same color denim jeans. Another huge denim trend was the **dungaree**. Fitted, baggy, striped, buttoned or unbuttoned dungarees are iconic for the 90s, where TLC, The Fugees, Will Smith and **Tupac** wore them proudly. High-end labels that were worn often by big Hip-Hop artists like Tommy Hilfinger Guess Jeans, Levi's, Versace, Moschino and Calvin Klein also started focusing more on denim.

There also was an accessory that really rose to popularity in the 90s, the **bucket hat**. Often worn by artists such as LL Cool J, Wu-Tang Clan and EPMD, the general public followed and the bucket hat became very **popular**. Not only Hip-Hop artists wore bucket hats, also actors in famous movies were seen with the **accessory**, such as the huge movie hit Pulp Fiction by Quentin Tarantino, where an actor chose to wear a Kangol bucket hat. Many hip hop artist afterwards wore the **kangaroo** logo regularly and Kangol became a dominating brand in bucket hats.



brands

Besides Kangol, there were a few other important brands within the 90s Hip-Hop fashion scene. Hip-Hop group **Wu-Tang Clan** introduced **Polo Sport** in 1993 which cemented the place of premium American sportswear in the genre's fashion. Nike and Adidas also were hugely **popular brands in the 90s**, from clothing to sneakers. Fully clothed in an Adidas tracksuit or just an Adidas jacket combined with a pair of baggy jeans were often seen outfits. A few years after Michael Jordan signed Air Jordans, Nike spun the series off into its own Air Jordan line, which created the most biggest chapter in sneaker culture as sneakers became a staple in day-to-day wear.



POLO SPORT



Hip-Hop fashion had and still has a **huge influence** on music, (American) society and fashion today, as it continues to trend and grow even bigger. Even though the style is a big part of society and is mostly seen as a positive addition to society now, **it is important to continue the education of the roots, story and message of the style, since the style was not always seen the way we see it now. In actualization, the Hip-Hop choice of clothing represent years of oppression and their message in style and music greatly helped Afro-Americans emancipate as they claimed their place in American society.** It is therefore important that when we wear this style today, we should be aware of the emotional history and message behind this choice of style, especially since this history is actually still ongoing.

This fight of the Afro-Americans with (institutionalized) racism and **police violence** continues today and what happened to George Floyd is a great example of the differential **unjustified** treatment between **racess** that still exists. Connecting this daily struggle of the Afro-American community to the Hip-Hop style we all love to wear nowadays, it should be clear that we should never forget to acknowledge when we adopt customs, ideas or practices from a certain community, since we might diminish the fight and hurt of the communities behind it. Instead, we should be educated and aware of the **rebellion and emancipation** of the **history** of the **Afro-American community** if we do choose to dress ourselves in the style of Hip-Hop in the present.